



AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY.

MICHIGAN

Testimony in Support of HB 4276, End Common Core in Michigan

March 20, 2013

Chairman and Committee Members:

On behalf of more than 87,000 Americans for Prosperity-Michigan activists, I am writing in support of House Bill 4276, which would end Michigan's participation in Common Core.

The federal government has required states to raise their academic standards at least five times over the last two decades with little success. President Bill Clinton's Goals 2000, President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind, and President Barack Obama's Race to the Top have all asked states to raise their standards, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has subsequently found no significant improvement in student achievement.

Common Core standards are essentially another federal government "knows best" mandate that adopts the same failed strategies over the last 40 years by simply calling for higher standards. It has undergone no field testing or evaluation and was never voted on by Michigan lawmakers.

We accept in other industries — technology, health care, automotive and manufacturing — that competition drives innovation, lowers prices and all-around improves standards for both products and services. New standards are demanded continuously by the customer and improvements are made as a result. Why don't we do the same with education? Why does what works elsewhere get discarded so quickly, and what doesn't work gets tried ad nauseam?

Education is too important for society and prosperity to be controlled by those furthest from the students. Lindsey Burke of The Heritage Foundation sums it up best when she says that, "Adopting Common Core national standards and tests surrenders control of the content taught in local schools to distant national organizations and bureaucrats in Washington. It is the antithesis of reform that would put control of education in the hands of those closest to the student: local school leaders and parents."

That fact is not all students are created alike, and a one-sized fits all education platform is not the answer to improving education. Parents should be given more choices and local school districts and teachers should be given more flexibility to provide the higher standards students deserve. Common Core removes parents from important decisions regarding their child's education undermining the very nature of accountability. Do we want teachers and schools to be accountable to parents and their children, or to lawmakers in Washington, D.C. who can't even pass a budget?

If lawmakers are serious about improving education, then they should pursue reforms that embrace market mechanisms. Common Core in Michigan is entirely the wrong approach. Americans for Prosperity-Michigan is proud to support HB 4276. I urge your colleagues to support this important legislation and look forward to working with you in the future.

Regards,

Scott Hagerstrom
State Director, Michigan